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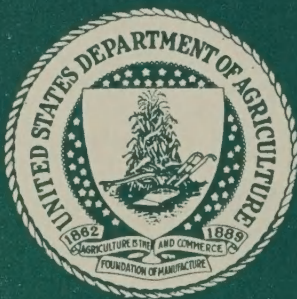
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COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

The Rural Component

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Report of the Young Executives Committee

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

JUNE 1973

PREFACE

The Young Executives Committee, established by Secretary's Memorandum No. 1727 of April 1971, has two stated purposes:

(1) to give broad interagency experience to young Department employees holding responsible positions and (2) to provide Department officials with new insights into agencywide issues. Committee members are selected by the Office of the Secretary from among employees recommended by individual agencies. To qualify, employees must be in grade GS-12 or above, age, 35 or under, and have demonstrated potential. Members serve for 1 fiscal year while maintaining normal full-time responsibilities in their regular positions.

In the attached report, we members of the second (1972-73) Young Executives Committee, examine rural development issues. We chose to look at rural development after considering several vital issues that face the Department. Rural development involves so many USDA agencies and its successes and failures have such broad implications for the nation's future that it provides both a valuable learning experience for members and the opportunity to generate ideas for Department use.

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means exhaustive because the topic itself has so many dimensions and committee members were able to devote only limited time to it. The report, however, does reflect our impressions from briefings, interviews, and field trips that brought us into personal contact with several hundred people directly involved in rural development at all levels. Our conversations ran the gamut from Members of Congress to Federal, State and local government officials to farmers and rural homemakers. In addition, committee members have studied numerous articles, hearings, and commission reports dealing with rural development problems and solutions.

All committee members reviewed the report that we are submitting as a committee document. It reflects situations as we found them and recommends what we would like to see happen.

Young Executives Committee
1972-73

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1. Rural development is an integral part of the problems facing all communities. To emphasize this point of view, we use the term "community improvement." Our study, however, concentrates on problems of the rural component.
2. We believe that the Federal Government can work effectively with State and local governments to effect a sound balance between the urban, suburban, and rural communities in which Americans live.
3. There has been no statement of national goals and no policy framework for the great number of community improvement programs. We believe such national goals should be established and subjected to continuing public debate and review.
4. We believe that goal-setting for community improvement requires information concerning our natural and economic resources, the desires of our people, and program costs.
5. We believe a comprehensive land use policy should be developed.
6. We recognize that funds are limited. Rather than stating categorically that more funds are needed, we take the position that priorities must be set on how government assistance will be allocated and used.

7. Local people must help determine the future direction of their communities, but such determination can best be made in the context of national goals.
8. We believe that multi-county planning and development activities are essential in meeting national goals at the local level and should be strengthened.
9. Areas of the United States should be identified that:
 - (1) have the potential for further growth but need substantial government aid in order to develop;
 - (2) have the potential for further growth but do not need substantial aid in order to develop; and
 - (3) do not have the potential for growth.We recommend that development funds be concentrated in the first category. Funding, however, should not be used merely for development. We believe that all Americans are entitled to access to certain basic services, and these services aimed at individual and community needs, must be delivered wherever practicable.
10. We recommend that information concerning the potential of any area be made available to all who request it to help them determine opportunities for improving the quality of life in their own or in other communities. This process will provide access to alternative life styles for urban, suburban, and

potential rural areas of which they are presently unaware.

11. We believe that people who, through their own free choice, wish to move to developing communities from areas which do not have potential growth should be provided with any needed assistance. This assistance could include purchase of their property by government to be held, in trust, for future Americans.

12. We believe that the national planning process must recognize the importance of increasing industry in rural America. A goal should be not to urbanize rural America but to encourage the spread of industry to provide rural Americans with opportunities for access to employment.

13. The major action agencies for community improvement should be housed within a Department of Community Improvement. They should act through multi-State regional offices which should have a great deal of autonomy.

14. Revenue sharing as a major source of rural development funding weakens the ability to direct resources toward specific national goals. We believe that Federal funds should be provided through a categorical grant-and-loan process to insure effective use of limited resources.

15. Federal funds should be provided for technical assistance in developing programs at the local level, for training local

leaders in concepts of community development and planning,
for research, and, most important, for program assessment.

16. Using committees as an organizational mechanism to run a
national rural development program has been ineffective
largely because committees have distinct limitations.

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INTRODUCTION

Rural Development is defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) as "making rural America a better place to live and work." While such a definition sets an admirable goal, it reveals little of the complex nature of the problems facing rural communities--in fact, all communities. The needs of rural America in a fastly urbanizing society have become more crucial as the 21st century nears. Many studies have been made, much empathy expressed, and the government challenged to provide a mechanism by which coordinated effort can effectively stimulate rural development. For many reasons, such as lack of national direction, limited involvement of the private sector, inadequate rural commitments, boundary maintenance, poor communication channels, an inadequate program development process, and a cloudy purpose, the effectiveness of current efforts has been diminished. Several members of Congress have said they believe passage of the 1972 Rural Development Act indicated national interest in rural development. In part this may be true. The Act attacks many aspects of rural development problems, but the larger questions of national direction remain unanswered.

Background

Interest in rural development among committee members was stimulated by many factors--the challenge facing the Department in

implementing the 1972 Rural Development Act; the apparent need for a national policy to direct rural development; the wide range of ideas (sometimes conflicting) among people who influence rural development policies; the inherent difficulties in defining "rural" and in attempting rural development; the broad involvement of USDA agencies in activities characterized as "rural development"; the possibility of government reorganization including the establishment of a Department of Community Development; and the exciting potential for planned growth and development based on society's experience with haphazard growth patterns of the past.

As the Committee's interest in rural development issues grew, it faced two major issues. The first involved national land use policy. How land is used is obviously so vital to community development that it seems almost impossible to divorce the two. Yet, at the same time, the implications of rural development are so broad and land use policy so complex that attempting to examine both in the limited time available became an insurmountable barrier. Therefore the Committee chose to concentrate its efforts on rural development issues. However we wish to caution the reader that separation of the two is arbitrary, and the report's emphasis on rural development reflects our limited time. We feel strongly that rural development and land use policy are so closely related that positive, well-thought-out action on both is imperative if we are

going to make the best use of all our resources.

The second issue involved the definition of "rural development"; the term itself implies that a different set of needs, problems, goals, priorities, and solutions exists in rural areas than in urban and suburban areas. Since "rural" is so difficult to define (as demonstrated by the various legislation and program regulations that use different criteria for eligibility), we conclude that "rural development" is a misnomer. The overall issues of orderly development affect every community and it is impossible to deal with development problems in rural communities without taking into account the complex interrelationships between States, cities, towns of all sizes, and other areas. We feel that making rural development a separate issue is artificial and implies boundaries of concern that are illusory. We also feel that the term "development" implies industrialization, while "improvement" implies consideration of all factors affecting community life. Thus we have elected to view our topic as "Community Improvement--The Rural Component."

Approach

Because of the vastness of the topic, we adopted multiple approaches to learn as much as we could--individually and as a committee--in a limited period of time.

As the first step we adopted the following assumption and working hypothesis:

Assumption: Orderly development of rural areas, to effect a sound balance between rural and urban America, can be accomplished.

Working Hypothesis: The Federal Government can work effectively with State and local governments to achieve this orderly development.

The committee's information-gathering activities fell into four general categories: discussions with Washington-based officials involved in community improvement programs and legislative activities; field trips to visit various types of community improvement activities and to meet local officials and citizens in order to discuss their problems, needs, successes, and goals; participation in scheduled meetings on community improvement topics; and extensive reading of materials on community improvement. Listings of resource people interviewed, areas visited, organizations contacted, and published materials reviewed are provided in appendices. In addition, we drew on the experience of those committee members whose work actively involves them in

rural development programs, both in the field and in Washington.

Our discussion throughout is aimed at providing the residents of rural America, farmers, rural non-farmers, and small town residents, a better place to live and work. While our report may be critical of some existing actions or programs, it is not intended to blanket with criticism all of the existing efforts in rural development.

The findings are presented in a series of chapters that deal with specific areas of interest within the community-improvement framework. We have not devoted space to background data or to programs that have been thoroughly documented by other authors. The focus of this report rather is on matters of Federal policy for community improvement and the issues and actions we think are important.

Goal Setting Process

National goals to encompass all aspects of community life need to be established. Of particular concern to us are land use policy, resource priority areas, basic services, and employment opportunities.

The Rural Development Act of 1972 deals with several important aspects of community life through six titles designed to fill gaps in existing legislation. The Act provides for expansion of existing programs: it adds some new authorities for existing agencies; and it gives strong emphasis to the role of the private sector in rural communities. The role assigned to the Secretary of Agriculture for coordination of the rural development work of all Federal departments and agencies is an important feature of the Act.

Another new approach appears in Section 603(4)(b) of the Act, which requires the Secretary of Agriculture to "establish employment, income, population, housing, and quality of community services and facilities goals for rural development and report annually prior to September 1 to Congress on progress in attaining such goals." This authority gives the USDA an exciting opportunity to better the planning processes for community improvement activities. The first major step, establishing national goals for rural development, must be completed initially by September 1, 1973. We believe these goals

should reflect the broadest possible consensus at the Federal level, not only within USDA but also within other departments and agencies which have programs that affect rural America. For example, the policies and programs of agencies as diverse as the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Transportation, and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, clearly have impact on rural America and must be considered in any overall goals. In addition, the USDA must take into account matters that are basically controlled outside the government, e.g., wage scales.

Once the first goals are established, they should be subject to continuing review not only at the national level but also at the State and local level by government offices, planning commissions, interested business and civic groups, and so forth. The purpose of this review would be not only to assist in local planning efforts, but also to refine and make necessary changes in the national goals. The goal-setting process offers a unique opportunity to focus public attention and to make all Americans, rural and urban, think about where their nation should be headed and how the always limited government funds can best be used to reach desired goals. To do this, the goals must be presented in clearly understood terms and in sufficient detail to permit meaningful discussion as well as meaningful local planning. At the same time, the goals must be broad enough to permit State and local officials to achieve the objectives by the means most adaptable to local conditions.

Finally, the Department needs further research on community improvement issues to obtain data as a basis for realistic discussion. For example, goal-setting requires data on the costs of alternative acceptable programs for certain areas or development stages. Making sure this type of information is developed and made available to all concerned groups and individuals should be one of the most important parts of the Department's planning and goal-setting responsibilities.

Land Use Planning

Each year in the United States hundreds of thousands of acres of fields, forests, and exurban green spaces are paved. We continue to permanently damage and deplete our limited land resources in unguided urban and rural sprawl. Flood plains are being developed indiscriminately, and residential and industrial sites are selected improperly. The resources of land--soil, water, sunlight, air, vegetation, wildlife, topography, and minerals continue to be exploited in a way that degrades the environment and permanently damages our welfare.

We believe that progress in improving our environment will lead to a better life. Our country has recognized that we must take positive steps to improve the quality of life and implement proper resource use plans if we are to achieve the goal of improved quality of life. To meet this goal, the Federal Government should develop an effective and equitable national land use policy. It must give full recognition to our goals in national economic development, regional development, environmental quality, and quality of life. National policy legislation should induce State and local governments to exercise their authority and responsibility in regulating land use via their rights to tax, condemn, and police in the interest of society as a whole.

The Federal Government must take leadership in compiling and better coordinating data so that they can be used for establishing

program priorities. Inventory, monitoring, and research work are necessary to determine trends, needs, condition, rate of depletion, destructive practices, and progress in reaching goals of land use. This information is needed to develop a realistic land use policy which recognizes that it is of primary importance to assist United States agriculture in meeting the food and fiber needs of this Nation. It is therefore of national interest that the Federal Government administer programs that assist farmers in maintaining their land at optimum productivity and while practising conservation.

The USDA presently has responsibility in providing technical assistance (e.g., soils interpretations) and information and education programs to assist local planners in understanding and developing wise land use plans. It is imperative that the delivery system for such information and assistance be evaluated and that necessary changes be made, so that the Federal Government can effectively meet its responsibility at all levels.

Resource Priority Areas

The national planning process should aim for the most effective use of the limited resources, including Federal funds, that are available for community improvement. Achieving this goal calls for decisions on how Federal assistance should be allocated and used. One important means of achieving this goal is the national planning process, which should identify (1) those areas of the United States that have potential for further growth but need substantial government aid in order to develop; (2) those areas that have potential for further growth but do not need substantial government aid in order to develop; and (3) those that do not have potential for further growth. As with other aspects of national planning, the identification process should reflect the views of Federal, State, and local people.

Federal development funds should then be concentrated in those areas in the first category: those with growth potential and needing substantial government aid. The purpose of concentrating Federal funds in these areas is to encourage economic development and industrialization in communities that offer a firm base for long-term economic growth. Such a base must not consist solely of short-term factors like tax incentives, soft loans, or an unskilled labor force that can be had, for a time, at unrealistically low wages. Funds for other aspects of community life should also be available in these areas since achievement of national goals involves improving the overall quality of life. Federal funds should continue for the other

two categories. However, they should be provided not for economic growth, but for other community improvement programs such as environmental concerns or insuring that, insofar as practicable, certain nationally agreed on basic services are provided.

Under the national planning process, some areas will be identified as not having growth potential. While some communities will be static, others will be declining, and some of these obviously will not have survival potential. All Americans are entitled to access to basic services, but in some instances the best long-range use of resources, consistent with national planning goals, should include providing people with assistance to move to areas where services can be made available.

The family that might want to move is faced with several problems: it is unaware of opportunities that might exist other than in major urban areas, and it is tied economically to its present community because it owns property and/or lacks sufficient resources to move.

A relocation program to encourage such a move should include:

Counseling--Many desirable communities where job opportunities exist have been bypassed in the migration to urban areas. A data bank of information on communities that offer a range of choices for families who wish to relocate should be established. Such a bank offers alternatives to urban and suburban families as well as those in rural

areas and could help solve the problems of urban concentration.

Reverse homesteading--Property could be purchased from residents wishing to relocate. The property could be returned to "open space" uses and the people (regardless of whether they had been property owners) could be provided with financial help to make the physical move.

This relocation program allows the individual the opportunity to freely choose where he wishes to live.

Facilities and Services

The Federal Government has played and should continue to play a major role in assisting rural areas to obtain basic services and facilities. Much progress has been made in providing essential services and facilities to rural areas, but much remains to be done. Essential services include those in such areas as health, education, housing, electricity, telephone, central water facilities, sewer systems, solid waste disposal systems, transportation, recreation, fire and police protection.

Future Federal funding for these services and facilities should be based on realistic planning that considers the growth potential of the area. There is a need to classify areas according to growth potential because many of the problems associated with providing basic services differ in growth and nongrowth areas. In growth areas this may mean providing services that are in excess of existing needs. In nongrowth areas, the problem is to provide facilities and services to meet needs at a price the population can afford. It should be recognized in planning that limited resources make it unreasonable to expect the same degree of all services in rural areas that exist in large urban centers. There are areas of such low population density that delivery of some services becomes unreasonable.

Concentrating Federal development funds in potential growth

areas does not negate the responsibility of government to assist in delivering certain basic services to all citizens regardless of the nature of their communities.

Employment Opportunities

One of the main problems in rural America is the lack of employment opportunities. With advances in agricultural technology, farm-related jobs are decreasing and other forms of employment must be found. Recreation and tourism provide opportunities in areas with the potential to attract visitors. Service industry jobs are also increasing throughout the United States. But, for many rural Americans, the primary means of improving employment opportunities is to increase the industrial base.

We believe that national planning must recognize the importance of increasing industry in rural America. The goal is not to urbanize rural America but to encourage the spread of industry to areas that would be accessible to rural people.

Successfully expanding the industrial base requires careful examination of an area's growth potential and needs. As discussed previously, Federal development funds should be concentrated in those areas that have growth potential but need substantial government aid to develop.

National and local planning to improve the industrial base in rural areas should consider the following: First, planning should be done on an inter-community basis since many small communities by themselves cannot sustain successful development efforts and provide the additional public services needed. Second, different

types of companies and plants should be sought to avoid the problems caused by single-industry-dominated areas. Third, means of attracting industry, such as tax incentives, should be carefully considered. Then, too, lowering the tax base makes it difficult for the community to pay for additional public services demanded by the company and its employees. Fourth, the types of industry attracted should be those which offer opportunities for skilled, as well as unskilled labor. Such industries permit career development and better job opportunities without forcing people to move to urban areas. Also, labor-intensive industries that utilize unskilled labor tend to move whenever wages rise. Fifth, planners should realize that one area's employment problems should not be solved at the expense of another's.

The national planning effort should also encourage more research into development problems and provide for wide dissemination of the results. It should also encourage vocational schools and community colleges to meet the needs of rural growth areas by locating in such areas and providing technical, managerial, and entrepreneurial training.

Finally, Federal and State governments should make their expertise readily available to local communities and they should design their loan and grant programs for development to work as simply and effectively as possible.

ORGANIZING FOR COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

Federal Government Organization

The Federal Government has historically been organized around programs that usually encompass only part of a larger mission. This is currently true with community development for rural areas. Housing and sewage problems, soil and water conservation practices, educational programs, forestry assistance programs, and health programs are all handled by different agencies. Funds are likewise appropriated for individual programs or segments of a program. This type of organization and accompanying funding fosters protectionism on the part of program managers. The program remains or becomes "essential." Seldom are critical reviews made and programs altered or eliminated when their usefulness has passed. Priorities are difficult to establish for community improvement programs within this political process where each program manager or agency administrator strives for maximum resources to carry out his respective program. It is only coincidental if program financing accurately reflects its priority within the total funding picture.

There are several ways to reorganize for the delivery of community improvement programs to the local level. The Administration has proposed that a Department of Community Development be established by consolidating related functions into a single Department. An amendment has been proposed as Title IV of the

Revenue Sharing Bill (S 1612) that would provide for the renaming of the present Department of Agriculture as the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and would elaborate the duties of the Secretary in establishing State and local rural development offices and in coordinating Federal rural development activities. H. R. 11678 proposes the creation of a Rural Development Commission to act as liaison with Federal agencies and the State Governors. Funds for rural development would be distributed to the States to carry out rural development programs originating in regional or area planning units. The Commission, fashioned after the Appalachian Regional Commission, would conduct research, make recommendations for implementing rural development programs, and approve applications for development assistance from regional or area planning units. Priority of programs for development would be considered.

The President has also proposed a "Better Communities" Act. It would replace Federal Categorical grants to communities (which apply for them) for seven development programs: urban renewal, model cities, water and sewer construction, open spaces, neighborhood facilities, loans for rehabilitation, and loans for planning such public facilities as streets and water and sewer lines. The categorical grants would be replaced with sums automatically going to States and localities under the broad classification of community development in a 5-year program. Localities would decide how to use the money.

Other organizational approaches have been proposed and many more could be developed. Choosing and implementing the best one is nearly impossible considering our political structure and its related power struggles. Realistically, there is probably not even a "best" organization. However, we should strive for a system that provides the maximum benefit to all people within resources available.

Our present organization has not completely met the needs of rural America. We believe a more effective approach is possible. The Executive Branch has recognized shortcomings of our present structure by its recent reorganization and revenue-sharing proposals. This organization proposal has merit since it attempts to place agencies and similar programs within the same Department at the national level. However, if agencies were allowed to operate autonomously as in the past, the benefits derived from such a reorganization would be nil.

There are a number of Federal organizational alternatives. One of these might be to retain responsibility for Rural Development within USDA because existing agencies are familiar with many rural community needs and have been responsible for administering rural programs. Department personnel can be categorized as "experts" in certain areas of rural development and are familiar allies to many rural community leaders. There have also been a number of successes in improving specific rural communities through

categorical programs. Although results of many USDA rural programs have been inadequate, they have come closer to meeting objectives than have many Housing and Urban Development efforts. In addition, political pressures dictate keeping rural development within USDA. The Rural Development Act of 1972 and Congressional views of Administration proposals attest to this fact. "Pride of authorship" plays a significant role in Congressional actions related to rural development since many of the programs were molded by powerful Congressional leaders.

Another approach would be to consolidate rural development activities in a new Department of Community Improvement because rural and urban problems are interrelated; for example continuous migration between rural and urban areas creates problems, and agricultural producers are no longer the main component of a rural economy. An analysis of past efforts for rural or urban improvement indicates that before substantial progress can be made these groups must work together.

Either of these two approaches and others would work if we are willing to commit resources commensurate with the severity of the problem and needs. Without this commitment none will work. Obviously, the present situation is much less than desirable. Is it good enough for America?

We recommend an organization that places as many community

improvement programs within the same Department as possible and gives this organization the authority to obtain technical advice and support from other Departments. In essence, we recommend a Department of Community Improvement. This is essential to insure that required resources will be available to the community and that priorities can be established. Currently, agency administrators are trying to solve individual problems with categorical grants and programs that may or may not meet the needs of the community on a priority basis. One agency within a Department of Community Improvement should have primary responsibility for the rural component. The overall number of agencies in the Department should be held to an absolute minimum. At the national level, resources should be directed to program formulation, direction, review, and adjustment. This would encompass the overall national policies for land use, population dispersion, environmental quality control, water and sewage, and similar items.

We support the concept of local people helping to determine the direction of their communities, but such determination must be made in the context of national goals. We have realized that environmental issues cannot be left solely in the hands of local government. That the sewage from Town A pollutes the river in Town B is obvious, and we have decided--as a nation--that Town A cannot disregard Town B. The impact of some local development

decisions is just as widespread as the impact of local environmental decisions, and the process of decentralization must take into account which decisions shall be made at the various governmental levels.

Regional Approach

Federal

A regional approach to the Federal program would allow this local input in the determination of their own priorities, yet it would assure that decisions and funds were all being used toward the national goals.

Multistate regional centers should be established for the Department of Community Improvement. Preferably, all agencies of the Department within each region would be housed in the same location and be under the direction of one regional administrator. Past experiences with programs spread among many agencies with varied regional organizations headquartered in numerous towns have proved ineffective as well as inefficient.

Decisionmaking in the regions would be provided by officials who could be expected to be in touch with both local issues and broad national policy guidelines. To make them effective in this effort, they should have sufficient authority to act and enforce rather than simply review. The Regional Administrator would designate a full-time representative to the Federal Regional Council. Goals should be established for each region, goals that

are in accord with national policy, are representative of the region's needs and potential, and are reasonably attainable. Techniques must be established to evaluate program accomplishments. The regional centers should be used as technical resource centers providing information, experts, and survey and design assistance. Regional officials should coordinate State activities through arbitration and persuasion but should also have the authority to act to bring results. Program guidance would be provided through review, adjustment, and approval of sub-State action plans, program evaluation, and funding controls. The most effective organization of the Department of Community Improvement for the delivery of programs within the regions must be determined.

Sub-State Regions

The lack of coordination between Federal, State, and local governments has been detrimental to effective management of community programs. Closely related to this problem has been the fragmented approach to the planning and implementation processes of these bodies.

State organization must be left to the individual states. However, since rural improvement must be directed to the local community, the units of State and local government must be strengthened or reorganized to enable them to deal effectively with the problems of their communities. The strictly

local approach to planning by cities and counties has become antiquated and obsolete. Likewise, projects for community improvement cannot be handled entirely by the State or Federal Government.

There have been numerous attempts at all levels of government to bridge the gap. One of the most promising approaches is sub-State districts required by OMB Circular A-95. These districts were established for planning, review, coordination, and evaluation of Federal and federally assisted programs and projects. However, major weaknesses of the current sub-State districts are insufficient funds, technical skills, and leadership training and authority.

We recommend that the sub-State district concept be continued but expanded in scope to overcome these weaknesses. A district should encompass a geographical area with similar characteristics, problems, etc., in order to obtain the cooperation of its communities, and it should include more than one county or parish.

We believe that sub-State districts should be an important organizational component in fulfilling the objectives of improving rural America. In order to accomplish this, the districts should:

- Have a board of directors composed of private citizens of the district, State government personnel, and an employee of the Department

of Community Improvement.

- Have full-time staff consisting of local, State, and Federal governmental representatives, including an employee of the Department of Community Improvement.
- Be able to obtain technical advice of experts in rural improvement without cost.
- Develop a multiyear improvement plan and yearly implementation plans for community improvement for their districts based on anticipated funding levels.
- Have authority to implement plans upon approval and funding by the regional center of the Department of Community Improvement.

Funding

Funds could be considered from many different sources, but it is recognized that the Federal Government will be a major source of funds for rural community improvement, since this is a national problem. Success in fulfilling our national goals will largely be determined by the funding source.

If we view the rural component of community improvement as a matter of national priority, then funds and funding methods should reflect this priority. The funds available for each year may not reach the need reflected in the goals. Nevertheless it is imperative that all funds available be directed toward these goals. Categorical grants, loans, and loan insurance should be utilized for the development of programs to meet established national goals. Furthermore, Federal funding controls should be used to insure that the moneys are used to better both local communities and the nation.

Revenue Sharing such as the proposed Better Communities Act of 1973, appears to be an easy way out for the Federal Government. In effect, it acknowledges that community improvement is not working as had been envisioned when programs were established. The Federal Government seems unable to make them work. Consequently States and local governments are being given the responsibility and money to improve their own situations, which hopefully will benefit the nation as a whole. These bills bypass the national planning

goals and do not insure that local use of funds will lead to community improvement. Moreover, money will be spread too thinly among communities and there will be few controls requiring that spending be for projects within the national goals.

A program that disburses funds without firm direction and control will not solve the ills of America. It only passes the buck!

Revenue sharing provides a shotgun approach to problems requiring far more complex solutions, and would weaken the ability to direct energies toward national goals.

Committees as a Means to Implement Programs

We recognize that the current program thrust provides for local, State and Federal rural development committees that are assigned the task of fostering cooperation and coordination among existing Federal and State rural development programs. Moreover, there are several proposals for additional rural development committees.

Using committees as an organizational mechanism to run a Federal rural development program has been ineffective largely because committees have distinct limitations that are frequently overlooked: Committees have never been given authority to act; communication channels between Federal committees and State and local committees are very limited; many committees meet infrequently, with the result that significant programs are not produced and continuity cannot be maintained; part-time assignment

does not result in an adequate commitment to a program; few private citizens, organizations, firms, etc., are involved in existing or proposed rural development committees, either as members or consultants.

Committees, however, do have a role. They should provide a mechanism for discussing multiple and frequently competing agency rural development efforts, promoting cooperation among agencies, providing for public involvement, and exchanging ideas.

We believe that to meet our national rural development goals effectively, legislative and departmental authorities, as well as line authority to manage and direct resources, must be assigned to legally constituted agencies and legally appointed employees.

Community Participation

Community participation is a key ingredient in community efforts. There is a **crucial** need to utilize leadership and citizen participation at the local level. However, many communities have neither the capability nor the commitment to assess their potentials or their goals. Further, they are confused by the multiplicity of government programs and their requirements. Current Federal efforts to develop local leadership are too limited and scattered to have much impact on improving this situation.

Improved methods for training local leaders is a necessity. Communities must be assisted in recognizing their interrelationship with other communities in geographical proximity. They must join together in decision-making and goal setting processes to make the most of their opportunities for improvement. Organization into multicomunity areas has helped to bring about cooperative planning and improved services and opportunities in such fields as education, where school consolidations have given rural students more complete educational opportunities. Other areas where there is a communality of concern and interest should follow this example. Community leaders should also serve on multicounty or sub-State commissions that approve Federal grants. Participation on these boards would provide direct input from

rural citizens at two important points in the funding process: in the request for funds and in the supervision of funding. Direct experience also insures a better understanding of procedures, goals, and nature of the funding process.

Two important components of successful community improvement are business and industry. Very few community improvements get off the ground without the support of the lending institutions serving the area. In cooperation with other sectors, these elements must play a vital role in the development of a community by providing job opportunities, and by training the available work force for new businesses, either through initiating and sponsoring programs of their own or in response to requests from planning committees. Businessmen should consult with development leaders on steps to be taken for attracting new business to an area. They must be active participants on development committees, encourage employees to become involved in their community, and make facilities available for meetings or recreational activities, whenever feasible.

Local civic, volunteer, and nonprofit service organizations and foundations should also be encouraged to contribute to the success of rural development programs. They can mobilize community support and undertake environmental improvement projects, vocational training, and similar efforts, as well

as provide leadership in collecting basic information needed for planning and attracting new business and medical facilities.

In mobilizing support for improvement within a community, local leaders and planners must take measures to encourage every segment to become involved in their community's growth. Too often Federal programs have resulted from the fact that State and local leaders have not met their responsibilities to the poor and disadvantaged. Community improvement programs provide an excellent opportunity for local power structures to demonstrate that they have learned the lessons of the past and that they can develop and implement programs for all, regardless of race, economic, social, or political status.

June 8, 1973

RESOURCE PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS CONTACTED IN WASHINGTON, D. C.United States Department of Agriculture

Ashworth, Richard (Office of the Secretary)
 Bathhurst, Verne M. (Soil Conservation Service)
 Beale, Calvin (Economic Research Service)
 Bottum, John (Extension Service)
 Butz, Earl L. (Office of the Secretary)
 Campbell, J. Philip (Office of the Secretary)
 Carlson, William (Office of Planning and Evaluation)
 Coffey, Joseph D. (Office of the Secretary)
 Copen, Melvyn (Office of Information Systems)
 Cowden, Thomas (Office of the Secretary)
 Daft, Lynn (Economic Research Service)
 Davis, Howard (Food and Nutrition Service)
 Elliott, Frank (Office of the Secretary)
 Erwin, William (Office of the Secretary)
 Fernstrom, Richard (Extension Service)
 Guntharp, Walter (Office of the Secretary)
 Hansen, Edward H. (Office of the Secretary)
 Kellogg, Earl (Office of the Secretary)
 Lyng, Richard (Office of the Secretary)
 Moss, William (Office of the Secretary)
 Munson, Karl (Extension Service)
 Paarlberg, Don (Office of the Secretary)
 Ralston, N. P. (Office of the Secretary)
 Schertz, Lyle (Economic Research Service)
 Thomson, Joan (Office of the Secretary)
 Wood, James S. (Office of the Secretary)
 Wright, Joseph (Office of the Secretary)

OTHER

Baker, John, Consultant, Senate Committee on Agriculture & Forestry
 Ballard, Al, Community Development Specialist, National Rural Electric
 Cooperative Association
 Breathitt, Edward T., Vice President, Public Affairs, Southern
 Railway System (Coalition for Rural Development)
 Deal, Elwyn, Assistant Director, Agricultural Programs, Cooperative
 Extension Service, University of Maryland
 Giltmeir, James, Staff, Senate Committee on Agriculture & Forestry
 Goldmark, Peter C., President and Director of Research, Goldmark
 Communications Corporation, Stanford, Connecticut
 Howell, Robert, Director, Public Affairs Leadership Program, Cooperative
 Extension Service, Pennsylvania State University (and
 participant in the program)
 Lantz, Roy M., Executive Secretary, Maryland Rural Affairs Council

McLeod, Michael R., Staff, Senate Committee on Agriculture & Forestry
Mead, Dana, Assistant Director, President's Domestic Affairs Council
Poage, W. R., Chairman, Committee on Agriculture, U. S. House of
Representatives
Reece, Forest, Staff, Senate Committee on Agriculture & Forestry
Robinson, Eric, Assistant Division Chief, Natural Resources Program
Division, Office of Management and Budget
Thornton, Jim, Staff, Senate Committee on Agriculture & Forestry
Whitten, Jamie L., Chairman, Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture - Environmental and Consumer Protection,
U. S. House of Representatives

NORTH CAROLINA

Farmers Home Administration
Representatives of New Hope Water System
The towns of Saratoga, Stantonsburg and Black Creek
Reporter for Nashville, North Carolina Newspaper and
several farmers

OREGON

Farmers Home Administration
Forest Service
Cooperative Extension Service
Rural Electrification Administration
Soil Conservation Service
Economic Development Administration
County Commissioners of the following:
 Lincoln
 Jackson
 Descutes
 Lane
Chamber of Commerce for the following:
 Polk County
 Lane County
Officials of Lincoln City
Bureau of Land Management
Bureau of Reclamation
Oregon State Game Commission
Lincoln County Resource Council
Editor of Lincoln County News Guard
State Water Resource Board
State Rural Development Commission
Chairman Newport Port Commission
Manager KBCH Radio in Newport
Oregon Coastal Conservation and Development Commission
Oregon State University
Sea Grant Advisory Program
Dean, Oregon State University Graduate School
Oregon State Forestry Service
Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service

SOUTH CAROLINA

Rural Community Leaders

Regional Planning Commission

OEO Funded (not exclusively but mainly) Comprehensive Health Services

Stand Tall Commission - Electric Co-op-REA (Rural Electrification Administration)

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